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Attorneys for Defendant Google LLC

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, SAN JOSE DIVISION

CHASOM BROWN, WILLIAM BYATT,
JEREMY DAVIS, CHRISTOPHER
CASTILLO, and MONIQUE TRUJILLO,
individually and on behalf of all similarly
situated,

Plaintiffs,

v.

GOOGLE LLC,
Defendant.

Case No. 5:20-cv-03664-LHK-SVK

**ADMINISTRATIVE MOTION TO SEAL
JOINT SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE TO
DKT. 147, 147-1, 159, 159-1 RE: STATUS
OF DISCOVERY DISPUTES**

Referral: Hon. Susan van Keulen, USMJ

I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Civil Local Rules 7-11 and 79-5, Defendant Google LLC (“Google”) respectfully seeks to seal certain portions of the parties’ Joint Submission In Response to Dkt. 147, 147-1, 159, 159-1 Re: Status of Discovery Disputes (“Joint Submission”), which contains non-public, sensitive confidential and proprietary business information that could affect Google’s competitive standing and may expose Google to increased security risks if publicly disclosed, including the various types of Google’s internal identifiers/cookies and their proprietary functions. The Court previously granted Google’s motions to seal the same information it seeks to seal now, including in Dkt. Nos. 152, and 160, 172. On the same bases, the Court also sealed the April 29, 2021 hearing (Dkt. No. 143) and the April 29, 2021 hearing transcript (Dkt. No. 174). This information is highly confidential and should be protected.

This Administrative Motion pertains for the following information contained in the Joint Submission:

Document	Portions to be Filed Under Seal	Party Claiming Confidentiality
Joint Submission	Portions Highlighted in Yellow at pages 6, 10	Google

II. LEGAL STANDARD

A party seeking to seal material must “establish[] that the document, or portions thereof, are privileged, protectable as a trade secret or otherwise entitled to protection under the law” (*i.e.*, is “sealable”). Civ. L.R. 79-5(b). The sealing request must also “be narrowly tailored to seek sealing only of sealable material.” *Id.*

In the context of dispositive motions, materials may be sealed in the Ninth Circuit upon a showing that there are “compelling reasons” to seal the information. *See Kamakanav. City & Cty. of Honolulu*, 447 F.3d 1172, 1179-80 (9th Cir. 2006). However, a party seeking to seal information in a non-dispositive motion must show only “good cause.” *Id.* at 1179-80. The rationale for the lower standard with respect to non-dispositive motions is that “the public has less of a need for access to court records attached only to non-dispositive motions because these documents are often unrelated,

1 or only tangentially related, to the underlying cause of action” and that as a result “[t]he public
 2 policies that support the right of access to dispositive motions, and related materials, do not apply with
 3 equal force to non-dispositive materials.” *Kamakana*, 447 F.3d at 1179; *see also TVIIM, LLC v.*
 4 *McAfee, Inc.*, 2015 WL 5116721, at *1 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 28, 2015) (“Records attached to non-
 5 dispositive motions are not subject to the strong presumption of access.”) (citation omitted). Under
 6 the “good cause” standard, courts will seal statements reporting on a company’s users, sales,
 7 investments, or other information that is ordinarily kept secret for competitive purposes. *See*
 8 *Hanginout, Inc. v. Google, Inc.*, 2014 WL 1234499, at *1 (S.D. Cal. Mar. 24, 2014); *Nitride*
 9 *Semiconductors Co. v. RayVio Corp.*, 2018 WL 10701873, at *1 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 1, 2018) (granting
 10 motion to seal “[c]onfidential and proprietary information regarding [Defendant]’s products” under
 11 “good cause” standard) (Van Keulen, J.).

12 A discovery statement is non-dispositive, and thus the good cause standard applies. *See e.g.*
 13 *Pieterston v. Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.*, 2018 WL 10362631, at *2 (N.D. Cal. Nov. 8, 2018) (“The
 14 parties have filed two separate motions to seal portions of the discovery letter briefs that are pending
 15 before the Court. Because the sealing requests were made in conjunction with a non-dispositive
 16 discovery motion, a showing under the good cause standard will suffice.”). Although the materials
 17 that Google seeks to seal here easily meet the higher “compelling reasons” standard, the Court need
 18 only consider whether these materials meet the lower “good cause” standard.

19 **III. THE ABOVE IDENTIFIED MATERIALS EASILY MEET THE “GOOD CAUSE”** 20 **STANDARD AND SHOULD ALL BE SEALED**

21 Courts have repeatedly found it appropriate to seal documents that contain “business
 22 information that might harm a litigant’s competitive standing.” *Nixon v. Warner Commc’ns, Inc.*, 435
 23 U.S. 589, 589-99 (1978). Good cause to seal is shown when a party seeks to seal materials that
 24 “contain[] confidential information about the operation of [the party’s] products and that public
 25 disclosure could harm [the party] by disclosing confidential technical information.” *Digital Reg of*
 26 *Texas, LLC v. Adobe Sys., Inc.*, 2014 WL 6986068, at *1 (N.D. Cal. Dec. 10, 2014). Materials that
 27 could harm a litigant’s competitive standing may be sealed even under the “compelling reasons”
 28 standard. *See e.g., Icon-IP Pty Ltd. v. Specialized Bicycle Components, Inc.*, 2015 WL 984121, at *2

(N.D. Cal. Mar. 4, 2015) (information “is appropriately sealable under the ‘compelling reasons’ standard where that information could be used to the company’s competitive disadvantage”) (citation omitted). Courts in this district have also determined that motions to seal may be granted as to potential trade secrets. *See, e.g. United Tactical Sys., LLC v. Real Action Paintball, Inc.*, 2015 WL 295584, at *3 (N.D. Cal. Jan. 21, 2015) (rejecting argument against sealing “that [the party] ha[s] not shown that the substance of the information . . . amounts to a trade secret”).

Here, the Joint Submission comprises confidential and proprietary information regarding highly sensitive features of Google’s internal systems and operations that Google does not share publicly. Specifically, this information provides details related to the various types of Google’s internal identifiers/cookies and their proprietary functions. Such information reveals Google’s internal strategies, system designs, and business practices for operating and maintaining many of its important services while complying with its legal and privacy obligations.

Public disclosure of the above-listed information would harm Google’s competitive standing it has earned through years of innovation and careful deliberation, by revealing sensitive aspects of Google’s proprietary systems, strategies, and designs to Google’s competitors. That alone is a proper basis to seal such information. *See, e.g., Free Range Content, Inc. v. Google Inc.*, No. 14-cv-02329-BLF, Dkt. No. 192, at 3-9 (N.D. Cal. May 3, 2017) (granting Google’s motion to seal certain sensitive business information related to Google’s processes and policies to ensure the integrity and security of a different advertising system); *Huawei Techs., Co. v. Samsung Elecs. Co.*, No. 3:16-cv-02787-WHO, Dkt. No. 446, at 19 (N.D. Cal. Jan. 30, 2019) (sealing confidential sales data because “disclosure would harm their competitive standing by giving competitors insight they do not have”); *Trotsky v. Travelers Indem. Co.*, 2013 WL 12116153, at *8 (W.D. Wash. May 8, 2013) (granting motion to seal as to “internal research results that disclose statistical coding that is not publically available”).

Moreover, if publicly disclosed, malicious actors may use such information to seek to compromise Google’s internal identifier systems. Google would be placed at an increased risk of cyber security threats. *See, e.g., In re Google Inc. Gmail Litig.*, 2013 WL 5366963, at *3 (N.D. Cal. Sept. 25, 2013) (sealing “material concern[ing] how users’ interactions with the Gmail system affects how messages are transmitted” because if made public, it “could lead to a breach in the security of the

1 Gmail system”). The security threat is an additional reason for this Court to seal the identified
 2 information.

3 The information Google seeks to redact, including the internal identifiers/cookies and their
 4 functionalities, is the minimal amount of information needed to protect its internal systems and
 5 operations from being exposed to not only its competitors but also to nefarious actors who may
 6 improperly seek access to and disrupt these systems and operations. The “good cause” rather than the
 7 “compelling reasons” standard should apply but under either standard, Google’s sealing request is
 8 warranted.

9 **IV. CONCLUSION**

10 For the foregoing reasons, the Court should seal the identified portions of the Joint
 11 Submission.

12 DATED: May 26, 2021

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